

Brief History of Vermont Lutheran Church



High atop a hill in the Township of Vermont stands the stately red brick structure known as Vermont Lutheran Church. Its early beginnings are found to be in September 1855 when a group in the community met to form the congregation that officially began in 1856. Family histories and records indicate that some of the early settlers came as soon as 1850, urging others from Norway to come to the beautiful land. This indeed was a travel that revealed a testimony of faith, courage, and fortitude. The days were rough, the territory new, and a foreign tongue all contributed to the adventure these early immigrants were facing.

The first services of this congregation were held in the Village Hall in Black Earth and when the weather was pleasant services were held outdoors. There were seventy-four communicants at the service held in September 1855. During the following year four services were held and at the last of these four services a protocol was signed by Rev. P.M. Brodahl, thus marking the official beginning of the Vermont Lutheran Congregation on October 3, 1856.

Plans for the first church began with the committee agreeing to the amount of \$794 for the structure. The first log church was brought from Black Earth by twenty teams of oxen in January, 1860. It was located on Hwy. 78 near the junction of Union Valley Road. A historical marker can be found near the top of the hill on Vermont Church Road. This sign was erected just in time for the Sesquicentennial celebration in July, 2006.

The second Vermont Lutheran Church was located at the present site and was built at a cost of \$804.90. To raise this amount of money the congregation voted to tax each

farmer \$1 per “forty” or 30 cents for each \$1 he possessed otherwise. There were 64 families at that time. In 1866 Vermont Lutheran Congregation had 645 members according to the parochial school report.

The third and present church was completed in 1914 with dedication services being held in May of that year.

The constitution that was written in 1884 was translated into the English language and revised and was approved at the annual meeting in 1939.

Since these days many changes have evolved:

- Constitution has been updated several times
- Church services and Sunday School held every Sunday
- Services held in English, with celebrations bringing in history of the congregation
- Electricity, furnace and air conditioning installed
- Sanctuary remodeled
- Nursery area made available
- Narthex addition added
- Kitchen remodeled
- Elevator installed
- Pastor’s office constructed
- Library area relocated
- Congregants vote to become a ‘stand-alone’ congregation for the first time in the history of Vermont Lutheran Church with an emphasis on outreach and mission

Pastors who have served Vermont Lutheran Church

The Rev. Peter M. Brodahl	1856—1860
The Rev. John N. Field	1860—1883
The Rev. Olaus P. Syftesad	1883—1890
The Rev. Severin Gunderson	1890—1932
The Rev. Oliver Solberg	1954—1962
The Rev. Theodore N. Borgen	1962—1983
The Rev. Jorgen Kappel-Hanson	1983—1987
The Rev. Margaret Hammer	1983—1987
The Rev. Vernon Awes	1988—1992
The Rev. Martha Nack	1988—1992
The Rev. Sally Smith Ankerfeldt	1992—1997
The Rev. Dan Odden	1994—2002
The Rev. Ellen Munter	1998—2002
The Rev. Kari Vadis	2003—2005
The Rev. Timothy Vadis	2003—2006
The Rev. John Shep	2006—2008
The Rev. Chad L. Christensen	2009 - present